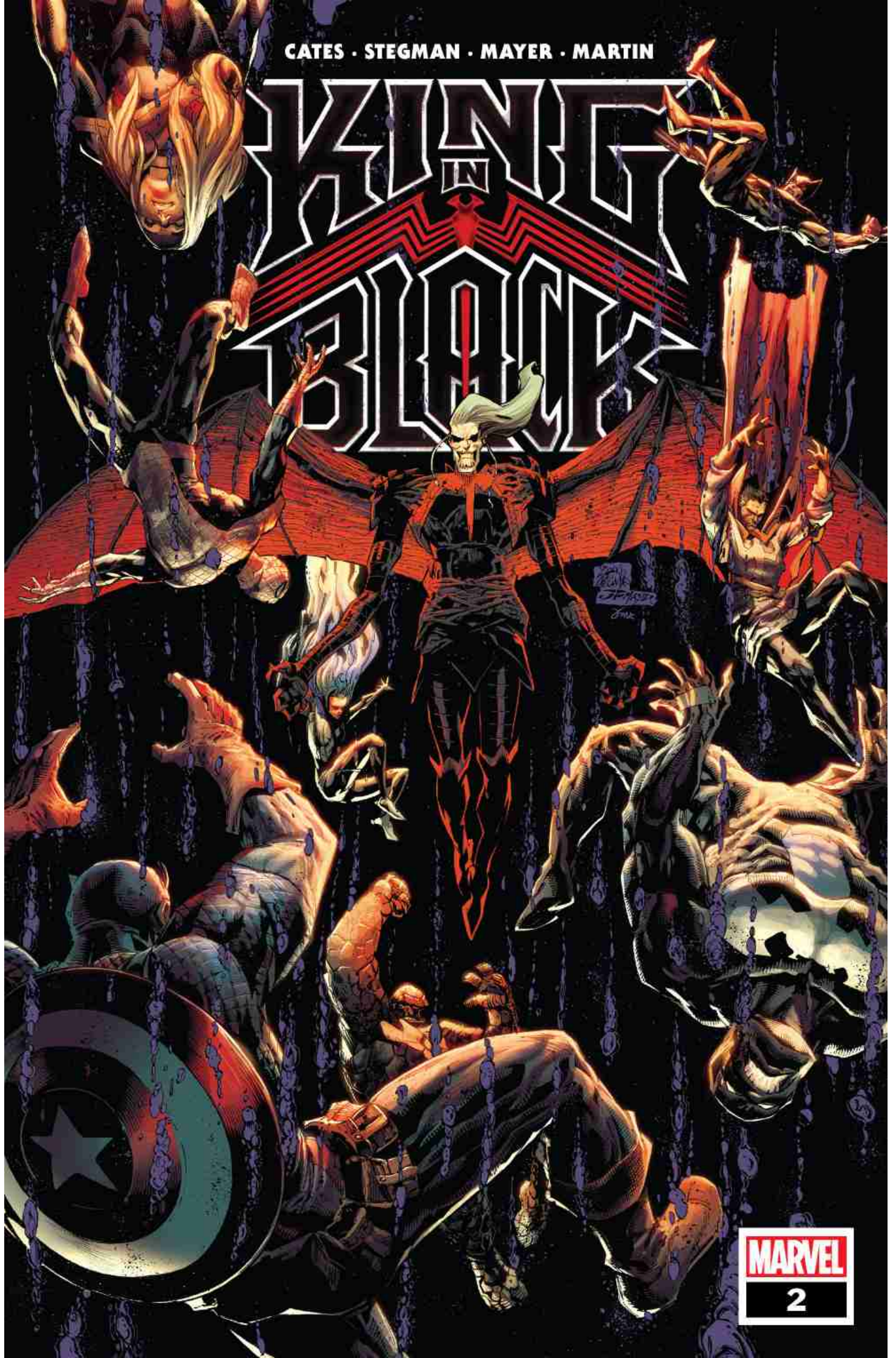


CATES · STEGMAN · MAYER · MARTIN

KING IN BLACK



MARVEL

2

EDDIE BROCK HAS BEEN LIVING A NIGHTMARE.

AS **VENOM**, HE HAS EXACTED JUSTICE ON THOSE WHO WOULD HURT THE INNOCENT FOR YEARS --BONDED TO AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL ORGANISM, CALLED A SYMBIOTE, THAT GRANTS HIM ABILITIES SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN.

BUT RECENTLY, A **DARKNESS** BEGAN TO STIR IN BROCK'S OTHER - SOMETHING ANCIENT, PRIMORDIAL AND FULL OF MALICE REACHING OUT FROM THE CREATURE'S HOMEWORLD:

KNULL. THE CREATOR AND GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES.

OLDER THAN MEMORY AND IMPRISONED AT THE EDGE OF THE GALAXY FOR MILLENNIA, THE GODKING OF THE SYMBIOTES HAS BEEN FREED, LEADING A HORDE OF MORE THAN A HUNDRED THOUSAND DRAGONS ACROSS THE COSMOS WITH A TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION AND DEATH IN THEIR WAKE.

KING IN BLACK

CHAPTER TWO FALL

DONNY CATES WRITER // **RYAN STEGMAN** PENCILER

JP MAYER INKER // **FRANK MARTIN** COLOR ARTIST

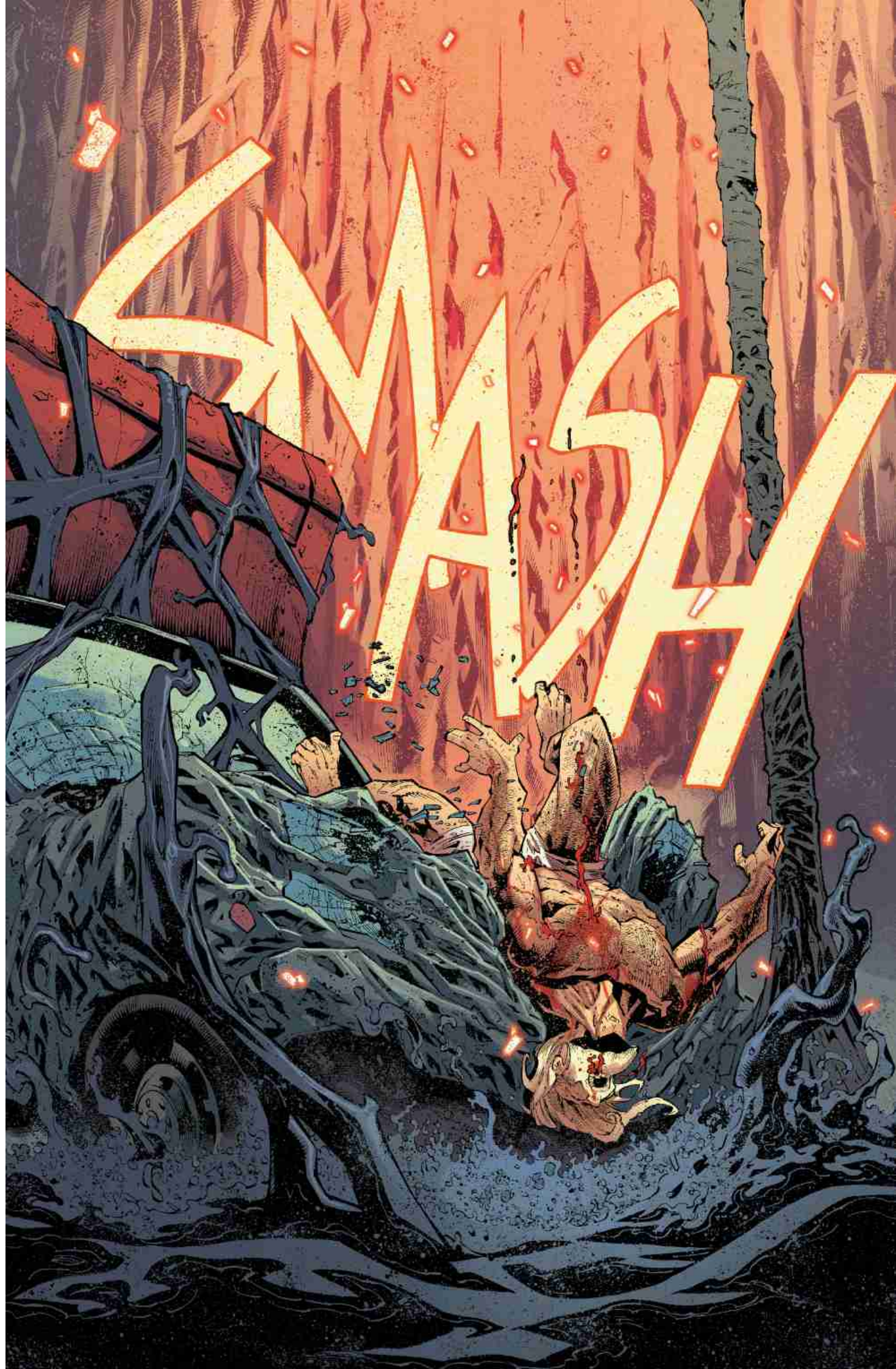
VC's CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER

RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & FRANK MARTIN COVER ARTISTS

LEINIL FRANCIS YU & SUNNY GHO [INTERLOCKING];
JOSHUA CASSARA & DEAN WHITE [DRAGON];
DECLAN SHALVEY [SPOILER]; **IAN DEDERMAN** [TATTOO]
VARIANT COVER ARTISTS

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EDDIE!!!

OH MY GOD.

NO, NO, EDDIE, I COULDN'T... I C-COULDN'T GET TO YOU. THERE WERE TOO MANY...

EDDIE, PLEASE! TALK TO ME! I DON'T... I DON'T KNOW WHAT...



HELP!

PLEASE! I NEED HELP!!! ANYONE?! IS THERE--

P-PETE...



DYLAN.

P-PROMISE ME...Y-YOU...



HONESTLY,
HOW HARD IS
IT TO KILL
ONE MAN?



AGHHHH!!

I KNOW IT
HURTS, BUT WE GOTTA
GET YOU HELP. THERE'S
NO ONE ELSE. KNULL...
HE TOOK THEM. HE KILLED
THEM, EDDIE! NOW,
COME ON, WE GOTTA--



AGH! SPIDER-
SENSE! GET--



--DOWN!



OH
GOD...

HE
DIDN'T KILL
THEM...



...HE MADE
THEM HIS
ARMY.



AGH!

OKAY...
WE--WE GOTTA
GO! WE CAN'T FACE
THEM, AND NO ONE
ELSE IS...



...COMING?



"I KINDA HAVE
A REPUTATION
TO MAINTAIN."





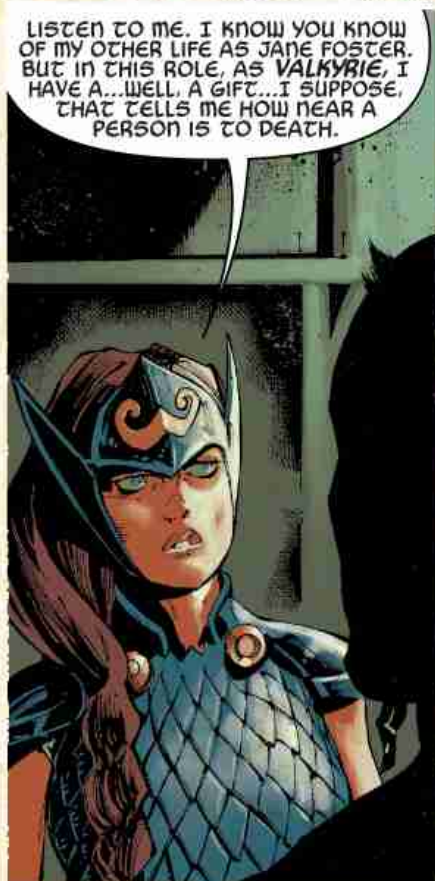
SO I'VE
HEARD THE FRANKLY
DIRE DIAGNOSES. YOU'VE
TOLD ME EVERYTHING THAT'S
FRACTURED AND BROKEN
AND SHATTERED AND
RUPTURED AND
DISLOCATED...

THE HOME BASE AND LABORATORY OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.



...NOW'S THE
PART WHEN YOU
TELL ME HOW WE
FIX HIM, RIGHT,
DOC?

DOC?



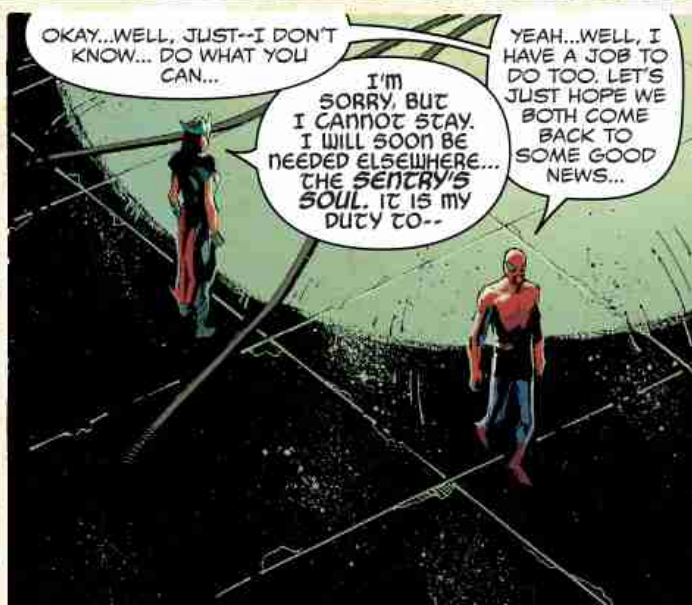
LISTEN TO ME. I KNOW YOU KNOW
OF MY OTHER LIFE AS JANE FOSTER.
BUT IN THIS ROLE, AS **VALKYRIE**, I
HAVE A...WELL, A GIFT...I SUPPOSE.
THAT TELLS ME HOW NEAR A
PERSON IS TO DEATH.



AND WHILE
I CAN'T TELL
YOU HOW WE CAN
FIX YOUR
FRIEND...



...I WILL TELL YOU
THAT WE NEED
TO HURRY.



OKAY...WELL, JUST--I DON'T
KNOW... DO WHAT YOU
CAN...

I'M
SORRY, BUT
I CANNOT STAY.
I WILL SOON BE
NEEDED ELSEWHERE...
THE **SENTRY'S**
SOUL. IT IS MY
DUTY TO--

YEAH...WELL, I
HAVE A JOB TO
DO TOO. LET'S
JUST HOPE WE
BOTH COME
BACK TO
SOME GOOD
NEWS...

"...BECAUSE
I'M SURE AS
HELL GOING
TO NEED IT."









I DO.



YOU'RE GOING TO HATE IT.

AND IT'S INSANE.

AND I'M GOING TO NEED A DRAGON.



WE NEED EDDIE BROCK ALIVE. HE'S THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN BREAK INTO THE HIVE AND GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO KNULL TO SHUT HIM DOWN.

AND THE ONLY THING THAT CAN SAVE HIM NOW IS A SYMBIOTE.



SO I'M GOING TO GET US ONE.



OKAY, I FOLLOW, BUT AREN'T THERE A MILLION OF THOSE THINGS? WHY DO YOU NEED ONE OF THE DRAGONS?

DYLAN, ISN'T YOUR CAT A SYMBIOTE?

THE DRAGONS ARE STRONGER. REMEMBER WHEN CARNAGE BONDED TO ONE? HE WAS ALMOST INVULNERABLE...

IRON MAN, IF YOU CAN CONTROL ONE, IF YOU CAN BOND IT TO MY DAD...



EXACTLY.

AND IN THE MEANTIME...I HAVE A FEW OTHER IDEAS...

THE BOTTOM OF THE MARIANA TRENCH.



ONE: NAMOR IS GOING TO GO WAKE UP SOME OF HIS OLD BUDDIES THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW I KNEW ABOUT.

WHAT ARE THEY CALLED AGAIN? THE BLACK TIDE?

I DIDN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN CURSED BY ANCIENT ATLANTIAN MAGIC, ANTHONY. AND ONCE THEY ARE AWAKE, IT WILL BE HELL TO BANISH THEM AGAIN.

AND WE'LL FIGHT THAT WAR WHEN WE GET TO IT. BUT YOU AND YOUR ATLANTIAN SOLDIERS JUST AREN'T GOING TO CUT IT HERE.



YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, BIG GUY...

...WE NEED AN ARMY THAT CAN FIGHT IN THE DARK.

CHERNOBYL, UKRAINE.

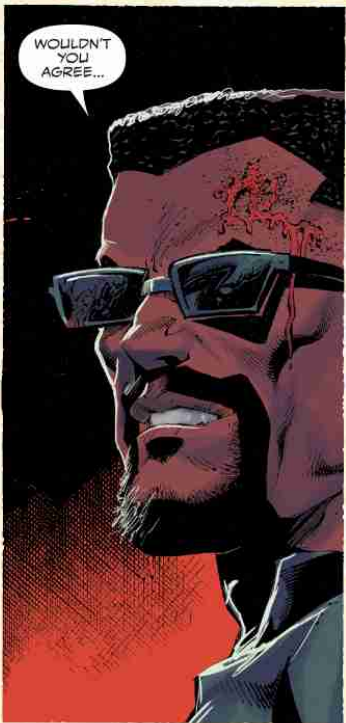


SPEAKING OF WHICH... BLADE?

HOW'S IT GOING WITH THE FANG BRIGADE?

OH, THEY'RE VERY COOPERATIVE.

EAGER, ONE MIGHT SAY...



WOULDN'T YOU AGREE...



...DRACULA?



THE BAR WITH NO NAME.

OKAY, GUYS. THIS LAST ONE IS GONNA STING...

...BUT HAS ANYONE GOTTEN ON THE LINE WITH OUR DULY ELECTED MAYOR?

LOOK, I HEAR YA, LOOT. SEEMS LIKE THIS #0048 HAPPENS ALL THE TIME NOW. IT'S JUST... I DON'T KNOW, MAN, FEELS REALLY BAD THIS TIME.

UGH. REMEMBER WHEN THE HEROES JUST ALL FOUGHT EACH OTHER? THOSE WERE THE DAYS, MAN...



LADIES. GENTLEMEN...



...WHO WANTS TO MAKE SOME MONEY?

WE'RE WORKING ON IT HERE, TONY. WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?

LIKE I SAID, REED, PRIORITY NUMBER ONE IS GETTING BROCK BACK IN THE FIGHT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING THIS, BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO STAND A CHANCE OUT HERE...

...WE'RE GOING TO NEED VENOM.

CHOMP

TONY?! TONY, I'M LOSING YOU!

I'M HERE! I HAVE TO BREAK THIS THING'S CONNECTION TO ITS HIVE.

LUCKILY...

ESSENTIALLY, I HAVE TO REWRITE ITS DNA, BREAK IT DOWN AND REBUILD IT SIMULTANEOUSLY.

PSSH

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I INVENTED EXTREMIS.

REEEE!

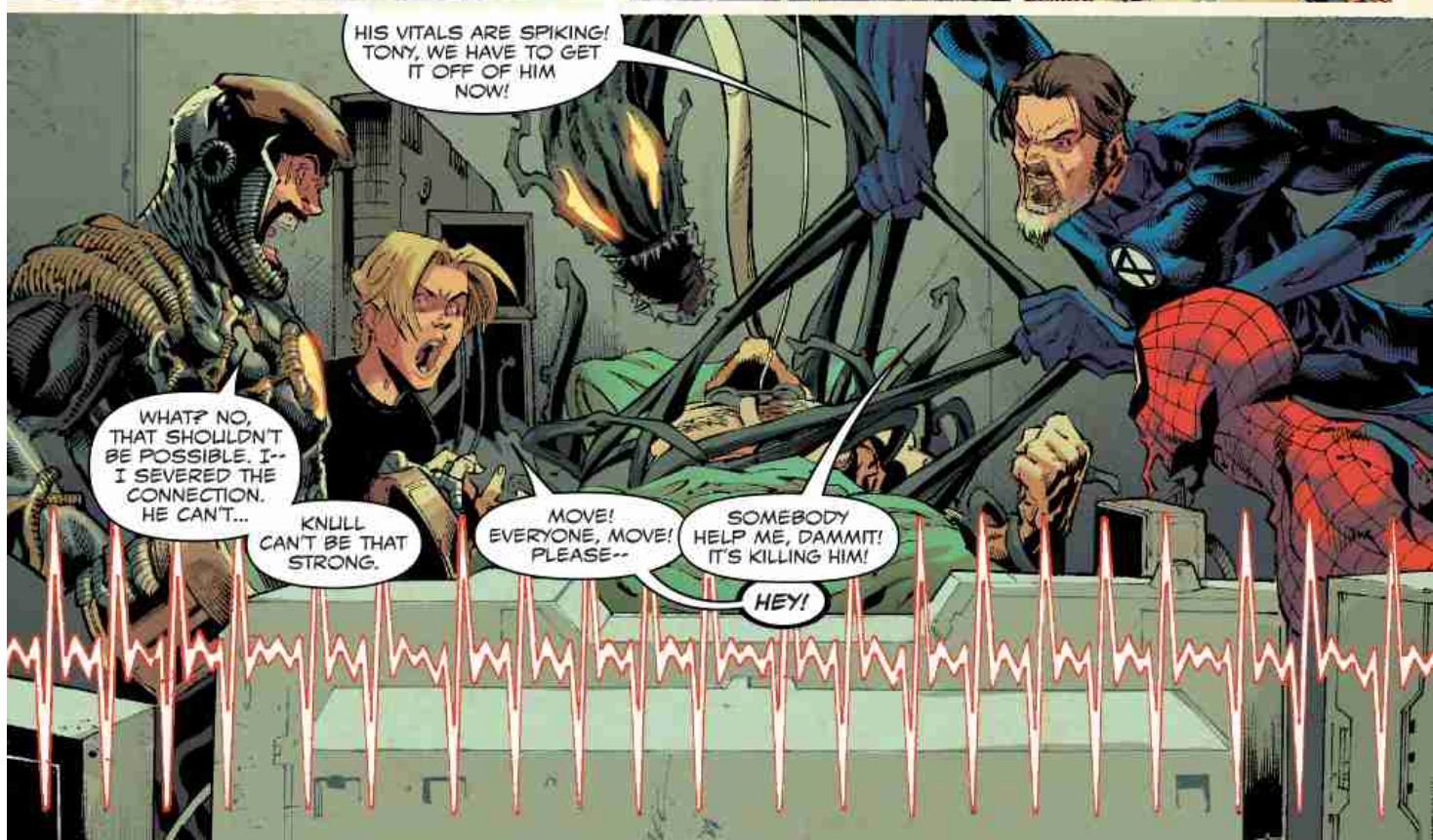
IT--IT'S WORKING! IT'S-- IT'S TALKING TO ME! WAKING UP!

I'M--I'M ALMOST THROUGH! DAMMIT--REED, THIS IS--

TONY?!

SYSTEMS OVERLOAD
OPERATING SYSTEM OVERLOAD
OPTICAL FAILURE

--TOO MUCH! MILLIONS OF VOICES! ALL OF THEM...IN...SO MUCH PAIN! I--I CAN SEE IT ALL!! IT'S--





YOU--YOU
ATOMIZED IT WITH...
WITH A--A THOUGHT...
DO YOU KNOW WHAT
THIS MEANS?



DYLAN,
YOU--YOU'RE
OUR SECRET
WEAPON!

DON'T
YOU SEE? WITH
YOUR POWER,
WE CAN SAVE
OUR FRIENDS--
AND THE
WORLD!

DYLAN, YOU ARE INCREDIBLE! THIS IS... MY GOD, THIS IS--

WHAT IS THAT?

REED.

WHAT
IS THAT
NOISE?

REED,
DAMMIT

WHAT?!
I WAS
SIMPLY--

HONEY,
LOOK...



LETTERS TO THE KING IN BLACK

REST IN PEACE, VENOM!!!

Hello in here, out there, around the world and aboard all the ships at sea!

Editor Devin Lewis reporting to you live and in print and OH MAN. I am so excited that the comic book you're holding in your hands exists. It has literally been years in the making.

I've written at length before about how much of KING IN BLACK was in Donny's VENOM pitch, but I've had to keep mum about the fact that THE ENDING TO THIS EPIC ISSUE WAS IN DONNY'S PITCH AS WELL!

Exactly one year ago to the day of this writing, planning for KING IN BLACK began in earnest. Hot on the heels of the blockbuster ABSOLUTE CARNAGE, Donny and Ryan flew to a sleet-covered New York to start planning the next epic chapter of their VENOM saga.

Eddie's death has ALWAYS been such a turning point of this story that during those planning sessions, the first two issues of KING IN BLACK and its assorted tie-ins were the EASY part.

We knew that this was the point we were driving toward. This was the North Star.

The symbiotic Celestials, Iron Man bonding to a symbiotic dragon with Extremis, even Sentry's grisly comeuppance — they were all ephemera compared to the moment on the last page of KING IN BLACK #2.

And after getting Eddie here? Well, that was when the work began — and just wait until you see where it ends!

ITEM: Speaking of our tie-ins, one of my favorites of the whole event just came out — VENOM #31. It follows Eddie Brock on his long descent from the top of the Empire State Building and perfectly lines up with page one of this story.

It's the first chapter of a gut punch of a story arc and a damn near perfect tie-in. After all, it's got Donny at the typewriter, Iban Coello at the drawing board and Jesus Aburtov on the digital painter's palette — how could it not be perfection?!

If you missed VENOM #31, go pick it up RIGHT NOW and ask your comic shop to add VENOM to your pull list! Trust me, reader, this is one arc you WON'T WANT TO MISS!

ITEM: Last month, when WEB OF VENOM: EMPYRE'S END was released, I included a CHALLENGE in the letter column! I threw down the gauntlet and asked you Venomaniacs out there in Mighty Marvel-dom to do a little bit of homework!

For those of you who may have missed that issue, first off — WHY?! It's a violent, scary and intense story that bridges the gap between AVENGERS/FANTASTIC FOUR — EMPYRE and sets the stage for KING IN BLACK in the most visceral ways possible.

BETTER YET! The whole team is reuniting to lend their talents to KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1! So while you're at your shop looking for EMPYRE'S END, be sure to ask 'em to add to add PLANET to your pull list!

AND ON THAT NOTE! Let's see

who out there in vile Venomdom answered the call!



Good evening, fine Marvel folks, I have never written in or attempted any of this in my 43 years of comics collecting but figured I would give this a try and send in the first appearances requested in the letter section from the WEB OF VENOM: EMPYRE'S END. I just bought and read this evening, so here goes!

Talos — INCREDIBLE HULK #418

Av-Rom — YOUNG AVENGERS #10
Keeyah — STARJAMMERS #1

M'Lanz — VENOM: FIRST HOST #1

Tarna — VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #2

Erhan Edwards — MARVEL KNIGHTS: SPIDER-MAN #13

General Kalamari — FANTASTIC FOUR #358

Knull — VENOM (2018) #3

I hope this is what you were looking for and can't wait for the KING IN BLACK event to start. Thanks for making 2020 a bright spot in a soon to be dark universe.

God Is Coming!

Marvel Fanatic,

Jason G.

JASON! You got all of these issues spot-on! That is IMPRESSIVE! You are a Venomaniac of the highest order. WELL DONE! So stoked that this challenge compelled you to write a letter no fewer than 43 years into your comic collecting!

Hey, Venom crew,

I'm a huge fan from Brazil and I don't usually write a lot to the staff, but man, I've really got to thank you guys for the amazing work you've been doing over the last two years. I'm absolutely addicted to VENOM and the WEB OF VENOM one-shots as well. I'm really excited for the upcoming KING IN BLACK, and I already know I'm going to fall in love with the event. The last time I got this excited with the character and its universe was when Rick Remender was doing his magic on the series, starring Flash Thompson and company. I've been dying to ask you guys about the possibility of writing about the last adventure of Patrick Mulligan with Toxin. He was a character with great potential, and he was killed off-panel by Blackheart. Is it possible to give this closure by showing us how that happened over in WEB OF VENOM?

Thanks,

Mateus K.

Hi, Mateus! DON'T WORRY! We have plans for Toxin! He's a favorite symbiote of those of us at VENOM HQ, and we've wanted to find a way to properly bring him back into the VENOM fold since Gerry Conway and Mike Perkins collaborated on the senses-shattering CARNAGE series that returned him to prominence — KEEP READING!



Well, I've waited almost a year, and I gotta say the storytelling is right back to sending shivers down my spine. Just seeing Knull come after Talos then come back again with that creepy smile on his face, I'm impatient for the KING IN BLACK. Every year I ask how every big Marvel event is gonna live up to my expectations after the previous big events, but

Marvel always manages to pull it off. I may be impatient for King in Black, but Knull is coming and we are not ready for it!

Beware the symbiotes!

Philip O.

Thanks for reading and for writing, Philip! We hope KING IN BLACK lived up to your excitement and expectations!

All right, Venomaniacs, let's close it out with a note from a fan right in the Marvel Universe's own backyard — New Jersey!



Dear VENOM Team,

My name is Austin. I'm 19, and ever since I was little, I've been a big fan of Venom and super heroes in general. I'm from New Jersey and I've read the VENOM series you guys have been putting out daily.

I am really enjoying the VENOM series and I loved VENOM #21 to #28. I think that you guys are doing an amazing job with the story arc — it is so brilliant the way it's drawn and how the story is told along with it.

You guys are changing the comic game and for the better. If you guys could, I would love it if I can make it onto the "Eddie's Clubhouse" page.

Thank you. Take care.

Yours truly,

Austin A.

Thanks for your note and being such a devoted reader! Sorry your note got caught in Knull's all-encompassing darkness and landed in Knull's Clubhouse,

rather than Eddie's!

But, hey! You never know! Donny's written ghosts before (anyone remember Bats from DOCTOR STRANGE?), so Eddie just may make a return yet!

Until then, keep a light on — or Knull just might get you.

Stay sharp!

Devin
11.19.20

VENOM #32



KING IN BLACK #3



FEAST YOUR EYES, TRUE BELIEVERS! FROM THE MASTERFUL MINDS OF DONNY CATES, IBAN COELLO, JESUS ABURTOV AND VC'S CLAYTON COWLES, COMES A PREVIEW OF THE CAN'T-MISS

VENOM #32!

I HAVE FALLEN
MANY TIMES IN
MY LIFE.

FALLEN SO HARD I
THOUGHT I WOULD
NEVER GET UP.

THAT I HAD SEEN
THE BOTTOM...AND
SCRATCHED AND
CLAWED MY WAY UP
FROM IT AND INTO
THE LIGHT AGAIN...

BUT
NOW...

...NOW I'M
FALLING AND
THERE **IS** NO
BOTTOM...



I LOOK
UP...

...AND THERE
IS ONLY...
DARKNESS.



I CAN...SEE
MYSELF...

...MY BODY.
MY PHYSICAL
FORM...



...STILL
HANGING ON
TO THE WORLD
ABOVE ME...



I SCREAM
AT HIM.

AT MYSELF.

I SCREAM UNTIL
I FEEL BLOOD IN
MY THROAT...



...BUT THERE IS NO
ONE TO HEAR IT.



I HAVE BEEN
IN THIS PLACE
BEFORE.

SWAM IN
IT. BEEN
TRAPPED
IN IT.



BUT
NEVER...LIKE
THIS.



EVEN WHEN **KNULL**
CONTROLLED MY OTHER
AND CAST ME OUT.



OR WHEN **CARNAGE** DID
THE SAME TO ME ON THE
ISLAND OF BONES...

...I COULD
ALWAYS FEEL A
CONNECTION.



ALWAYS SENSED
SOMETHING.

SOMETHING...
TETHERING ME TO
THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE ABYSS THAT IS
THE HIVE MIND.

VENOM,
MY OTHER...

DYLAN.

THEY WERE
ALWAYS THERE...



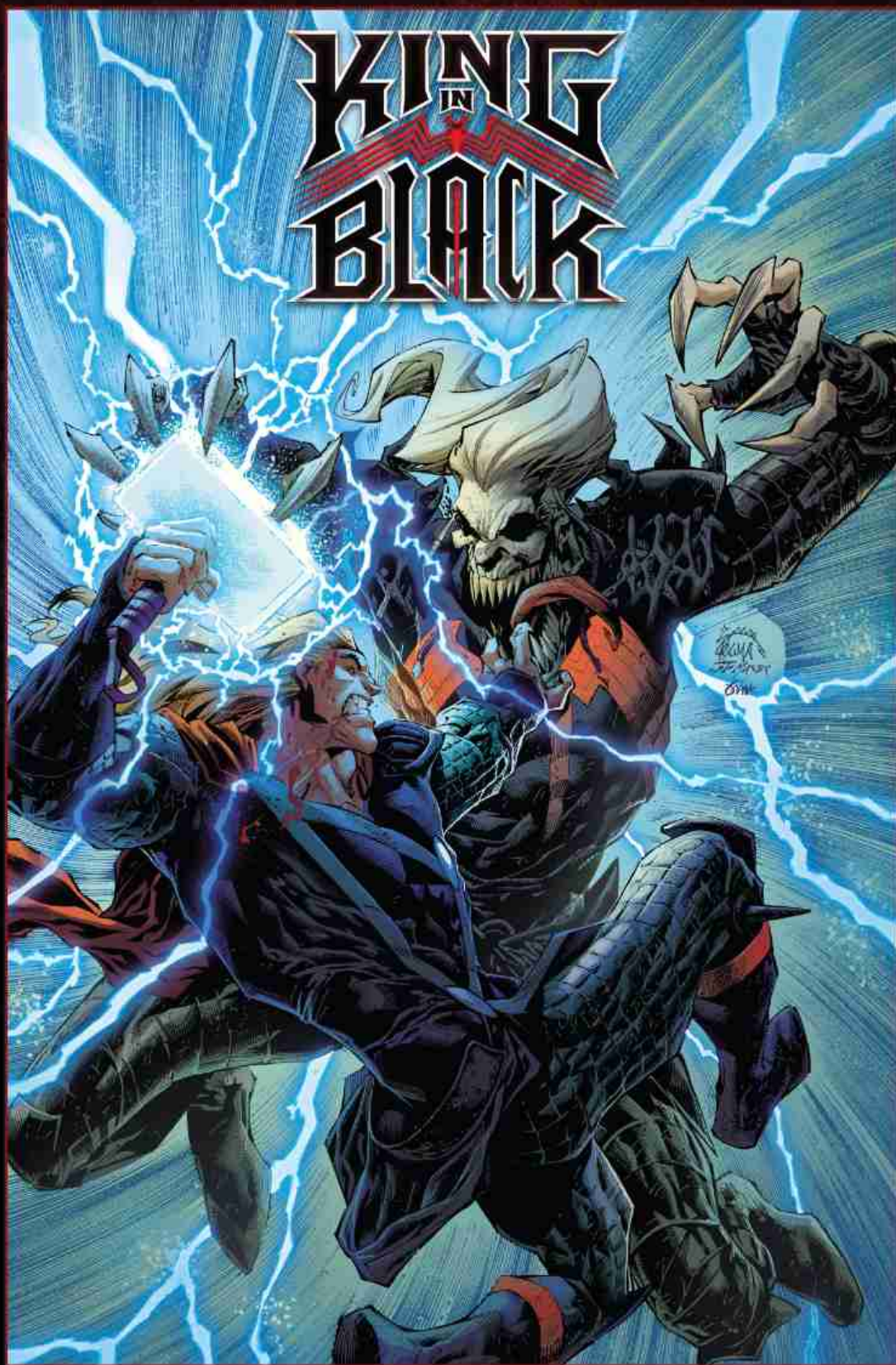
AND WE
WERE
ALWAYS...

...STRONGER...



...WHEN WE
WERENT AL--
BROCK!

NEXT:



KING IN BLACK #3

CHECKLIST

☒ **KING IN BLACK #1**

THE BEGINNING OF THE END!

☒ **ATLANTIS ATTACKS #5**

THE AGENTS OF ATLAS THINK THEY'RE PREPARED FOR ANY THREAT, BUT NOTHING COULD PREPARE THEM FOR WHAT'S COMING!

☒ **THE UNION #1**

AS KNULL'S FORCES UNLEASH FURY AROUND THE WORLD, WILL ONE HERO IN THE UNITED KINGDOM PAY THE ULTIMATE PRICE?

☒ **VENOM #31**

1,454 FEET... A LONG WAY DOWN.

☒ **KING IN BLACK: IMMORTAL HULK #1**

KNULL'S ARRIVED DURING THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR. TOO BAD THE HULK ISN'T PREPARED FOR EITHER!

☒ **KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #1**

PAST AND PRESENT COLLIDE IN THE UNDERSEA KINGDOM OF ATLANTIS!

☒ **BLACK CAT #1**

THE CAT IN BLACK TAKES ON THE KING IN BLACK, STAGING THE MOST DARING HEIST OF HER CAREER!

☒ **SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #2**

SPIDER-MAN TRAVELS THE GALAXY WITH A TALKING RACCOON FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!

☒ **KING IN BLACK #2**

☐ **SPIDER-WOMAN #7**

TRAPPED ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE MILKY WAY, JESSICA DREW FINDS HERSELF CAUGHT IN KNULL'S DESTRUCTIVE WAKE!

☐ **KING IN BLACK: IRON MAN/DOCTOR DOOM #1**

THE MEN CLAD IN METAL FACE OFF AGAINST A HOLLY JOLLY HORROR!

☐ **KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #2**

MORE SECRETS FROM NAMOR'S PAST STAND REVEALED AFTER THE REVELATIONS OF *KING IN BLACK #2*!

